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SHELTER FOR AFRICA'S HOMELESS POPULATION

- Preparations towards the International Year of Shelter for the homeless (IYSH)

SUMMARY

A sizeable proportion af Africa's population live under indigent (Shelter) conditions that could best be termed homeless. This phenomenon pertains to both urban and rural sectors of the region. For the rural areas, man-made and natural disaster have been the major causes of homelessness. With prolonged drought, desertification has taken root particularly in the Sahel, rendering several rural people homeless. Another source of natural disaster which has been a major cause of of homelessness in both rural and urban localities is cyclonic storms. These have caused devastating effects on several landed property and left many people homeless. A third cause of homelessness which could be associated with both urban and rural areas in Africa is man-made disaster, particularly political and racist aggression with the attendant refugees. Several refugees are homeless in the African region.

However, the urban areas have their characteristic homeless population living mainly in squatter and slum areas of urban Africa. In cities where the problem assumes gross dimensions, street living, sleeping in street drains, discarded boxes, wrecked ships, ect. are not uncommon. The homeless problem of urban Africa is a direct result of the process of urbanization and natural population growth. The suprising factor is that despite the glaring indigent living conditions, the plight of the homeless has not attracted enough attention of most governments.

Experience gained since 1976, however indicates that with renewed political commitment, international co-operation and assitance, the homeless could be housed effectively. It is suggested that much of the efforts to provide shelter for the homeless should be centred on the following areas:

- training (the homeless people) to produce local building materials and to perform simple building operations,
- technical assistance - in form of artisans and building foremen, to organized groups of homeless people,
- demonstration projects in the production and use of local building materials to provide shelter and low-cost sanitation systems,
- financial assistance to procure limited but essential tools, equipments and materials,
- organization (particularly of the homeless into manageable target groups)
- co-ordination with universities, research institutions and international organizations and popularization to maintain a continuity of the shelter programme,
- peri-urban land-use planning to facilitate both the acquisition of building plots and provision of essential services in the future.

It is finally suggested that each government should establish a department under the ministry responsible for housing to co-ordinate all the activities connected with the IYSH programme.

The paper is divided into seven parts. Part one defines the subject of homelessness and identifies its major causes in the African region. Part two provides a more detailed examination of the dimensions of the homeless problem as it relates to shelter requirements, land, infrastructure/services and public assistance. In part three, possible solutions to the homeless problem are discussed taking close account of experiences gained in the field of human settlements since 1976 as well as the major roles to be played by individual governments. Part four discusses the contribution from the homeless population while in part five a stage approach to implementation is outlined. Parts six and seven concentrate on the contributions of ECA, conclusions and general recommendations respectively.

INTRODUCTION

1. On 29 September 1980, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka made the following statement to the 35th Session of the UN General Assembly: "In the rush for development, urbanization has run out of control, sprawling ugly slums and ghettos, depopulating rural areas, and over crowding cornubations. Urban poverty, congestion and squatter are problems common to many of our developing countries". The Prime Minister then proposed the declaration of a special International Year to be dedicated to the problems of the millions of peoples who were homeless or who lived in shanties and substandard houses - the poorest of the poor throughout the world.

2. In support of the call made by the Prime Minister, the General Assembly took resolution 35/76 of 5 December 1980 in which it expressed its view that an international year devoted to the problems of the homeless peoples in urban and rural areas of the developing countries could be an appropriate occasion to focus the attention of the international community on those problems. As a follow-up, the General Assembly adopted resolution 36/71 in December 1981 and decided, in principle, that 1987 should be designated as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH). Consequently, the Executive Director of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements - UNCHS (Habitat) submitted a report (HS/C/5/5) on the subject to the Commission on Human Settlements at its fifth session. The end result of all the above (as well as other subsequent activities) is the resolution 37/221 adopted by the General Assembly at its thirty-seventh Session on the IYSH.

3. Among others, resolution 37/221 designates the UNCHS (Habitat) as the secretariat for the IYSH and as the lead agency for co-ordinating the relevant programmes and activities of other organizations and agencies concerned. The resolution also invites other bodies of the United Nations system to collaborate and make special efforts through existing and new programmes during the period 1983/1987 to help achieve the objectives and goals of the year.

4. It is true that street living and living in non-dwellings is becoming a common feature of urban and rural life in Africa also. Although these homeless people live in rather appalling conditions, their plight has failed to attract enough attention from governments as well as international organizations. The call from the Prime Minister and the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly could not therefore come at a more opportune time. However, as a typical housing issue, the problem of the homeless varies from one region to another thus necessitating differences in approach. This paper therefore, briefly examines the homeless problem of the African region and suggests some approaches to finding solutions.

1. AFRICA'S HOMELESS POPULATION

Who is Homeless

5. In everyday language, homelessness refers to living in a non-dwelling at best, or at worst, living without a dwelling. The latter refers to street living, while examples of the former include living in street drains, unserviceable vehicles, wrecked ships, packing cases left at dumping sites, etc.

6. In a broader sense, non-dwellings include buildings graded to be structurally unsafe, or those which, due to other factors (such as proximity to high tension power lines, leaking atomic reactor plants etc.), have been graded environmentally hazardous for human habitation.

7. The important factor about all the above is lack of security and inadequate protection against the extremes of weather. As a basic necessity of life, a home is supposed to be a safe abode with specific functions to fulfil among which protection against climatic variations, man-made environmental hazards, security of property and life, as well as privacy for economic and social functions feature most. Whenever a building does not effectively meet the above functions, it could conveniently be graded a non-dwelling thus rendering the resident a homeless person.

8. For the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (IYSH) however, homelessness is more complex, and the exact implication of the term as well as the purpose of the particular programme could best be deducted from the speech of the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka when he said: "In the rush for development, urbanization has run out of control, sprawling ugly slums and ghettos, depopulating rural areas and over crowding cornubations... The replacement of shanties with decent housing is not a peripheral part of development. It is the very core".

9. It is thus clear from the above that when the Prime Minister proposed the declaration of the IYSH, he had in mind both peoples who are homeless, as well as those who live in shanties or substandard houses.

10. For purposes of clarification therefore, it would be helpful to categorize the homeless population into two main classes according to the main features of their dwellings.

Table I: Broad Categorization of Homeless Population (according to main features of dwellings)

Category	Type of Dwelling	Main features of Dwelling
1a	non-dwelling	Streets living or living on verandas of commercial buildings, etc. - primary requirement is shelter.
1b	non-dwelling	Street drains, packing cases, wrecked ships, unserviceable vehicles - primary requirement is shelter.
2a	non-dwelling	Structurally and/or environmentally hazardous buildings - primary requirements are basic improvement and/or replacement.
2b	non-dwelling	Buildings which are structurally unsound and without basic services - primary requirements are basic improvements and provision of service facilities and infrastructure.

Characteristics

11. Any reference to homelessness implies the poorest section of the population characterized by lack of tangible possession, inadequate security, unemployment (or under paid), lack of skills, and whose immediate objective is to obtain just the basic necessities of life - i.e. including shelter. However, providing shelter for the homeless, requires as a first step, understanding the causes of homelessness. In the African region, two factors (among others) could be delineated, namely, migration/urban growth, and disaster i.e. man-made or natural.

12. The push and pull factors of immigration as well as urban population growth in the African context cannot be discussed in this paper, however, their undesirable effects on housing cannot be underestimated. In short, the highly centralized civil service structure, the concentration of service facilities and industries in a few primate cities on the one hand, and the apparent neglect of the rural sectors on the other, have contributed to define the direction of migratory movements.

13. The majority of African governments have not been able to provide adequately for the migrant in terms of employment, housing and other amenities. Some of such people, particularly the late migrants become temporarily homeless. With time, they turn to live in non-dwellings while searching for temporary manual jobs to make a living. At the last stage, they develop shanties out of any available materials usually at the urban periphery or even within the city boundaries on plots with doubtful ownership. These constitute the slums and squatter settlements of urban Africa which harbour the majority of the region's homeless people.

14. Homelessness in the context of rural settlements should be viewed from a different perspective. In these areas, the problem relates to living in dwellings that could be described as structurally unsafe. Usually built of local materials with varying structural quality, some rural houses have short life span. Quite apart, they lack periodic maintenance with the result that most of them develop structural failures, which render the occupant unsafe, and hence practically homeless.

15. A final cause of homelessness in the African region relates to disaster - natural and man-made. Certain parts of the African continent lie within seismic belts. Earth tremors, land slides and volcanoes which are associated with such disaster prone zones often render many people homeless. Other parts of the region particularly the south-eastern coastal strips are subject to devastating cyclonic storms. When these strike, the loss of landed property is enormous and several people are rendered homeless. A few examples are given below:

Table II: Damage to Landed Property by Cyclonic Storms

Date	Location	Causes of homelessness	No. of people affected
19/10/81	Bangui (C.A.R.)	Voilent Storms	700
20/1/82	Antananarivo (Madagascar)	heavy rains and floods	37,500
28/3/82	Yohamam & Antalaha (Madagascar)	Tropical Cyclones	117,000

Source: UNDRO News (Nov. 1981, January 1982 and March 1982).

16. Of late, desertification has become an equally important form of natural disaster which has rendered several rural settlements homeless. Prolonged droughts in the Sahel and regions boardering on the Kalahari have caused a rapid depletion of vegetative cover, resulting in the loss of agricultural produce and herd. Faced with hunger and starvation, the affected population has become normadic and homeless.

17. And yet another major cause of homelessness could be man-made. Fire could be disastrous; however, the housing problem of homeless refugees in the African region has become an issue of national and international concern. Faced by factors usually beyond their control - either through acts of aggression or internal political squabbles, Africa's refugees as by June 1982 numbered some 2.6 millions of which about 49% were concentrated in Somalia and Sudan alone. Certainly, the majority of these are homeless.

Size

18. Based upon the foregoing discussion, it becomes difficult to state explicitly, the total number of people who could be termed homeless in Africa. Although it is estimated that almost 59% of the urban population of Africa live in slums and squatter settlements, all buildings in the same sectors cannot be graded as non-dwelling. Case studies taken from Kumasi (Ghana), Lusaka (Zambia), Nairobi (Kenya) and Port Sudan (Sudan) indicate that on the average, some 72% of the dwellings surveyed were built of materials with 'very limited durability' 1/. It is estimated, for example that about 59% of the building material used in Deim Omna (Port Sudan) are scrap. It would appear however that mud bricks, adobe, mud and wattle constitute the main building materials in the majority of slums and squatter settlements in Africa. Most of these structures also have no foundations, thus limiting their durability.

19. One would conservatively conclude that the slum and squatter populations which live in structures built of bricks, adobe, timber, mud and wattle are not necessarily homeless although these buildings may have limited durability. On the contrary, that percentage of squatter and slum population which live in structures built of scrap and other mixed materials could be termed as living in non-dwellings and hence homeless. This proportion could be estimated at about 26% of the slum and squatter population for the whole region although there could be very wide variations between one settlement and another.

20. Upon the above assumptions, the homeless population of Africa's slums and squatter settlements could be estimated as follows:

Table III: Estimated Homeless Population in Urban Africa

Total Population of Africa	% Urban	% living in Squatter & Slum	% living in non-dwellings	Number homeless
436.6 m	28 (122 m)	59 (72 m)	26 (19 m)	(19 m)

21. It is similarly difficult to estimate what percentage of refugees would be termed truly homeless. The problem of providing adequate shelter for refugees depends upon the number involved at a given time and the ability of the host country to absorb the numbers in question. However, when large numbers are involved, as in the case of Somalia (700,000), Sudan (537,000), Zaire (325,000) and Burundi (214,000), a reasonable number are likely to remain homeless.

1/ Survey of Slums and Squatter Settlements, UNCHS (Habitat), 1982.

22. A similar note could be sounded about the region's population rendered homeless as a result of natural disaster. In instances related to storms, the calamities are localized. As a result, governments, aid agencies and charitable organizations have always cooperated to provide temporary shelter for the victims. Such assistance has however been lacking or else inadequate for victims of desertification.

23. It could be concluded from the above that the number of Africa's homeless population found in the slums and squatter settlements could be estimated to be about 19 million people. In addition, there are countless numbers rendered homeless as a result of natural or man-made disaster.

2. DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

24. A mere definition or categorization of the homeless population is insufficient to paint a true picture of the indigent conditions under which they live. The homeless problem relates to shelter, land, services and infrastructure requirements.

Shelter requirements

25. A basic requirement of the homeless population is shelter. Estimated for the 19.5 million urban homeless people, not less than 3.25 million housing units would be required (i.e. assuming an occupancy rate of 3 persons to the room unit and two rooms to the house). The above figure should however be regarded as the accumulated shelter needs and excludes the requirements for persons affected by natural or man-made disaster.

26. With an alarming urban growth rate of 5% per annum, shelter needs for the urban poor will be more pressing than ever, noting the inflationary trend in the building sector of all countries compared with dwindling real incomes. Quite apart, there does not appear to be any early end to the refugee problem of Africa in as much as the whole region is concerned. Africa may be confronting recurrent shelter problems relating to the refugee population and people displaced by natural disaster into the distant future.

Land

27. In most African countries, the new migrant seeks refuge in the inner city slum being attracted by the probability of finding a casual job. In the event of failure, some resort to entering squatter zones while the majority turn homeless. The point of interest is that the potential sites of manual jobs are most attractive to the homeless. At the early stage job security is the primary preoccupation of the homeless person.

28. However, when a source of income is secured, the migrant next looks for a rental housing commensurate with his earnings; this usually turns out to be within the inner city slum or the outer squatter area. In Africa, such a migrant would share a room in a shanty with colleagues while earlier migrants with higher incomes

obtain property rights from traditional land lords to erect a new shanty. In Africa, such development cannot be termed illegal in as much as verbal consent is obtained from the land owner, and since the development takes place outside the city boundary and hence uncovered by building codes and regulations.

29. The main problem of land which affects Africa's homeless population therefore relates to the high prices requested by the traditional land lord. On the contrary, where State land is involved, slow and complex legal procedures have restricted access to land for the majority of the homeless population. The main effect of the above two inhibiting factors (namely high land prices and slow/complex legal procedures) is the high residential densities which characterize all squatter settlements in the region.

Infrastructure and services

30. The appaling living conditions of the homeless population in Africa are felt when mention is made of infrastructure and service facilities. The most common problems relate to inadequate and unsafe water supply, inadequate sewage and garbage disposal systems, lack of health and educational facilities, poor roads and transportation services. The conditions vary and depend upon the location of the homeless person, i.e. inner city slum or squatter. In all however, water and waste disposal pose the major problems in Africa.

31. In most slum and squatter settlements the provision of water has not been accompanied by an effective waste disposal system. The result is concentration of liquid and solid wastes in backyards, ditches and other drainage courses, inevitably leading to the spread of contagious diseases. However, the greatest service problem of the homeless population in Africa relates to hygienic disposal of human excreta. And this pertains to both urban and rural localities.

32. Pit and bucket latrines constitute the main means of human excreta disposal not to mention the fact that defecation at open spaces is still a common phenomenon in some squatter settlements and areas invaded by people displaced by man-made and/or natural disaster. In instances where bucket or pit latrines are provided as communal facilities, constant queues outside the blocks demonstrate their total inadequacy not to mention the lack of privacy.

33. The situation could be appallingly bad if a large number of homeless refugees for example, invade a locality. The resulting inconvenience, lack of privacy and health hazard to the homeless population could readily be imagined.

34. On the regional level, health services are inadequate. In Africa, health provisions for the homeless are worse even though as a result of living conditions, they are especially exposed to diseases of different origins, particularly those related to environmental conditions and personal hygiene. The World Health Organization plays a major role in meeting the health requirements of homeless refugees and people displaced by natural disaster in Africa. However, where the homeless population are clustered in slums and squatter settlements, they have to do with a very limited number of clinics. Long waits, delays, complicated forms, impersonal and insensitive treatment by nurses and other officials as well

as long travelling distances to the clinics are usual difficulties the homeless have to contain. As a result, most of the homeless people prefer to use traditional health care methods. Lack of adequate access roads to these locations constitute another major bottleneck. Most of the road links to outer squatter settlements lack routine maintenance and are without drainage gutters. As a result, the access ways are not motorable during the rainy season. Closely related to the problem of lack of access roads, the outer squatter settlements are often not covered by other municipal facilities such as bus services. The total effect is that most homeless people walk for long distances in order to perform their daily economic and social activities.

Public Assistance

35. However, a surprising aspect of the problems facing the homeless population in the African region is the apparent [illegible] of public attention and assistance. It is proof enough from the foregoing discussion that the enormous public investments made by African governments in the sectors of health, water, waste disposal, education and transportation are invariably not to the benefit of the homeless population.

36 In the place of public assistance, however, there are unsympathetic public legislations which aggravate the living conditions of the homeless. In events where city boundaries are extended to cover existing peri-urban squatter settlements it is not uncommon for public law enforcing agents to advocate for the demolition of some existing structures. It could thus be summed up that the major problems of the homeless population in Africa relate to lack of shelter, land, infrastructure, services and insensitive public attention and assistance.

3. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO THE HOMELESS PROBLEM

37. It could appear that the most effective approach to solving the homeless problem would be renewed political commitment by individual African Governments addressed in two main ways:

- drawing upon experiences gained since 1976 in human settlements development to strenghten on-going activities as well as to initiate new programmes at the national and local levels.
- Co-operation with UN Agencies, International Organizations, Universities and Research Institutions to apply relevant solutions to the problems through demonstration.

38. The objective of this chapter is not to reproduce what has been achieved since 1976, but only to recall that date as a time when a concerted international approach has been adopted towards human settlement problems as a unit. Experiences gained during the period could therefore be applied by African Governments to resolve their local problems.

39. In line with the earlier achievements, it could be stated that the IYSH cannot be a period for research and experimentation; it is a period for practical demonstration. The said experiences could be applied to the major problem areas as follows:

Land

40. A sample survey of slums and squatter settlements in the African region indicates that as a result of the nature of land ownership in Africa - which could take the form of stool lands, family property or individual ownership, land for housing could readily be obtained through verbal consent (or else the offer of drinks) to the family head or chief. No legal documents or procedures in the western context are involved. Such residential land use is therefore, legal and as a result, most squatters in Africa cannot be termed illegal occupants. Squatting in Africa should first be viewed from the point of high residential densities, lack of service facilities and basic infrastructure.

41. It would therefore appear that the traditional system of obtaining building plots outside city boundaries is so deeply rooted in the society that any attempts to impose legal processes in the western context would only lead to very complex and cumbursome procedures. On the contrary, the peri-urban zones are the most fertile locations for future squatter settlements. A preventive approach will be for the governments to institute a system of peri-urban residential land demarcation in consultation with traditional land owners. Such a system would sustain the easy traditional process of acquiring building plots as well as ensure that peri-urban residential land use would conform with minimum standard requirements for the provision of infrastructure and service facilities. This proposal indicates a compromise between, (a) the traditional practice of acquiring building plots, (b) urban residential land use practice, and (c) provisions for developing essential services such as water, drainage, access ways, power lines, etc. in the future.

42. Another approach to the land problem would be for governments to utilize legislative instruments - where they exist, to acquire undeveloped plots for housing the homeless. Such plots could be serviced and distributed to the homeless to develop their own shelter.

43. A final suggestion relates to land already settled by squatters. As stated earlier, such land occupations are legal in the African context. It is suggested that African governments should rectify such acquisitions to conform with any legal processes that might be required. The effect will be that the squatter cannot be ejected, instead he has the requisite title to the land already occupied and should only be encouraged to improve upon the shelter.

Building materials

44. The most promising effort on the part of the homeless to provide their own shelter is demonstrated in the constructive manner,in which they utilize all kinds of materials to erect a dwelling. Ordinarily, these materials spell the professed undesirability of the type of buildings found in squatter and slum

settlements. It is noted, for example, that in Deim Omna (Port Sudan), 59% of the buildings are constructed from scrap and a further 39% from mixed materials. However, the efforts of the homeless in the latter direction should be regarded as their adaptation to economic and social conditions.

45. Experience gained since 1976 indicates that building materials need not be taken to mean only cement and galvanized iron roofing sheets: there are close substitutes such as lime, burnt bricks, dimension stone, timber and the like which are locally available. With little technical assistance, these materials could be produced by the homeless to build standard housing. In the latter regard, the primary solution to the building materials problem of the homeless population should be viewed from the point of productive organization which could be achieved through training as discussed later.

Building codes and regulations

46. In most countries these codes and regulations favour the tastes of the medium and high income urban dwellers. Particularly in urban Africa, building codes and regulations tend to favour the use of imported building materials. Quite apart from the fact that the indiscriminate use of codes based upon English, French or Portuguese systems inhibit co-ordination between neighbouring African countries, most of these regulations tend to mitigate against the ready use of local building materials. It could be stated that before most of the codes and regulations were prepared, there had not been sufficient research results to prove the effectiveness and durability of some local building materials. Such results are available at present.

47. A renewed role of the government will therefore, be to recognize the effectiveness of traditional building practice and local building materials in solving the the problem of the homeless population. For most countries, this will entail the revision of the building codes and regulations. As a complement to the revision of existing building codes and regulations, there is an urgent need to train the homeless people to produce and utilize available local building materials. There are appropriate technologies for the production of building materials from clay, natural pozzolanas, stone, timber and some agricultural waste. These have not been extensively utilized because the homeless people may not have the production know-how. It is the responsibility of the government to organize and train the homeless people to produce some of these materials.

Technology

48. What has been most wanting in any attempt to house the homeless is technology It is worth noting that the majority of the homeless people of Africa are unskilled or at best simi-skilled people. Combined with their low incomes therefore, their major imput into house building would be labour. Dwellings contructed by the homeless population therefore, involve the simplest possible technology.

49. In Africa, however, the architect has an ingrained control of conventional building construction technology. Once the so called standard design is completed, both building materials as well as construction technology have been predetermined. Usually trained in the developed countries the specifications naturally follow those found in the industrial countries much to the neglect of the rural capacities of the homeless population.

50. However, building construction technology need not be complex. Experience gained since 1976 indicates that there are simple and appropriate construction technologies that could be suitable to the needs of the homeless people. These technologies which could vary from the production of clamp-fired brick through burning of lime in dugouts to the use of simple hand tools to erect a wall, would be enough to meet the needs of the homeless. Africa does not need to import technology to produce prefabricated concrete slabs to house the homeless population. The important requirement here is training.

Finance

51. Finance plays a major role in house building since it is the most convenient means of exchange. By their very appearance, dwellings of the homeless give an impression of indigence. Table IV explains the income levels of the inhabitants of some selected slums and squatter settlements.

52. With such low wages usually below the absolute poverty income level, the homeless cannot afford any financial inputs into developing a dwelling. And since they have no landed property, fixed assets, or regular employment, they cannot have access to any organized financial market for mortgage loans.

53. However, there are feasible financing mechanisms which could effectively minimize the financial bottlenecks encountered in housing. Among the lot, thrift and savings associations, ease systems as well as cooperative housing associations could be organized in such ways that part of building materials produced (utilizing mainly unskilled labour) could be sold to generate funds for other inputs needed for the association's houses. The solution again lies in effective organization.

54. In addition African Governments could realize appreciable financial savings and raise funds through the following ways:

- limiting public financial assistance to specific building cost items only;
- organizing fund raising programmes to meet the initial financial requirements of the IYSH;
- restructuring the housing finance mechanisms to be more effective in mobilizing funds from the general public for long term investment in the housing sector;
- instituting discriminatory interest rates on mortgage loans in favour of the homeless people.

Table VI: Medium household income levels in select slums and squatter settlements and estimated poverty levels in urban areas

City	Settlements	Medium household income in US$/month	Absolute poverty income level for city US$/month	Relative poverty income level for city US$/month
Kumasi	Ayigya village	72	-	143
Lusaka	George Town	65	175	-
Nairobi	Kawangware	74	122	144
Port Sudan	Deim Omna	23	-	155

Source: UNCHS (Habitat 1980) Case studies and Social Indicators Data Sheet (World Bank, 1979).

55. For the immediate implementation of the programme funds will be required to hire technical skills, purchase specific building materials and equipments and also to organize demonstration and training programmes. At the initial phase of the programme, it would be necessary for every government to prepare details of the tasks to be undertaken, how these would be implemented and the costs involved.

56. Funds for the above phase of the programme could be raised through organized raffles, lotteries, etc. in addition to a limited budgetary allocation. This is feasible since the specific tasks involved could be detailed out with the appropriate cost constraints. Such financing mechanisms may however, not be appropriate long term financial sources for the homeless people. The fact is that after demonstration and training, a long term building process should be maintained and this would require a long term financing mechanism. This could constitute a major bottleneck noting the fact that the homeless are the poorest of the poor. It is suggested that African governments should restructure their existing financing mechanisms to be suitable to the long term needs of the homeless.

Infrastructure and services

57. As indicated earlier, what the homeless people need most (apart from basic shelter) are infrastructure and services such as water, waste disposal facilities, public transport, etc. Experience gained since 1976 however indicates for example, that there are low-cost waste disposal systems that could effectively get rid of household refuse and human excreta at very minimal maintenance cost. There are also technologies for the provision of water systems, access ways and street drains at comparatively low costs. Much of the costs involved could also be reduced by organizing the homeless people to offer free labour under technical supervision.

Training

58. The foregoing discussion indicates that governments can achieve much through effective organization and training. It is possible that in any efforts to provide shelter for the homeless, African governments could make commendable progress through training. A few examples are stated below:

Table V: Examples of Possible Effects of Training on Public Programmes to provide Shelter for the Homeless

Area of Training	Type of Training	Expected Output	Effects on IYSH Programmes
A. Production of building materials	Hand moulding of clay brick	Sund-dried brick	Reduce costs of walling material
B. "	Clamp firing	Burnt brick	Reduce cost of walling material
C. "	Burning of lime in dug-outs	hydrated lime	Reduce cost of binding and plastering material
D. Low cost sanitation	As in A, B & C plus brick laying	building materials and craftsmanship	Hygenic waste disposal system

59. It is evident from the above that with dedicated political commitment in the area of training alone, the greater proportion of inputs into any simple dwelling could be provided by the homeless people themselves.

Technical assistance

60. Another area of public commitment in solving the shelter problems of the homeless population is in the field of technical assistance. This could be accomplished by assigning building foremen and skilled artisans to assist organized groups of homeless people to build their homes. Such forms of technical assistance could also serve the purpose of training the people on the job so that basic building skills are transmitted gradually. In the latter area of technical assistance, governments could co-ordinate with technical and vocational institutions (which specialize in building trade) to deploy their students for practical trianing.

Demonstration Projects

61. It would be noticed therefore, that even on the part of governments, the solution to the problem of homelessness hinges on demonstration projects. These should be in the areas of production and use of local building materials, construction of low-cost waste disposal systems, etc. A combination of demonstration, technical assistance and training in any specific area of human settlements would be useful in instituting a building process with the active participation of the homeless people themselves. In the area of demonstration, it would be useful if African governments could co-operate with universities and research institutions to enable the latter to implement some of their research results.

Organization

62. Next to renewed political commitment in all the aforementioned areas, effective organization will be required to provide shelter for the homeless. In particular the homeless people should be organized into squads, each with a specific task to perform. The problem is that with the large numbers of homeless people to be housed, the demonstrations, instructions/training, etc, would yield fruitful results only if a limited number of people are involved at a time. In addition, there is a need for a designated government department to be responsible for co-ordinating the various activities under the programme.

4. CONTRIBUTION FROM THE HOMELESS POPULATION

63. The extent and nature of contribution from the homeless people towards the provision of shelter would depend upon the nature and cause of homelessness. Where homelessness is a result of natural disaster - particularly storms and flooding, it is probable that some of the people affected could contribute in cash and kind. However, in all other instances, the homeless have nothing to contribute apart from unskilled or semi-skilled labour.

64. It would thus be noted from the above that where large numbers of homeless peoples are concerned, their effective organization could pose major management problems. This situation could become worse in squatter areas where the primary concern of the people is to secure jobs, or in the instance of those rendered homeless through desertification (and hence threatened by hunger and starvation) or even in the instance of homeless refugees whose primary obsession would be food and security. In all events, however, labour could be the maximum input that could be expected from the homeless.

65. It should thus be a major programme for the governments involved to organize the homeless into groups to undertake specific tasks. The performance of such tasks should be scheduled not to disrupt any economic activities in which the homeless might already be involved.

5. STAGE APPROACH TO IMPLEMENTATION

Compendium of technology options

66. The discussion so far identifies three facts: that a reasonable proportion of the African population live under homeless conditions; that the dimension of the homeless problem is so enormous that it is only through a renewed and determined political commitment that the situation could be bridged; that there exists useful experiences that could be used to provide effective solutions.

67. For the African region, the first problem is whether the said technology options are known to all member States. Ineffective information dissemination could constitute a major bottleneck to the transfer of appropriate technology. It thus becomes necessary to prepare a compendium of technology options (appropriate to African conditions) on the specified subject areas. This compendium could thus furnish African governments with information on technology options available to solve specific shelter problems. The range of materials to be furnished by the compendium would vary from building materials, tools and equipments, through training manuals to organization.

68. In order to make a breakthrough, it will be advisable for each State to select and concentrate implementation efforts on very few technology options as well as problem areas. This will be necessary if people are to acquire the requisite skills easily and to transmit them to others.

Identifying priority activities

69. It is also possible that the homeless problem could vary from one country to another; for example, while in one country the problem may be centred in squatter settlements thus requiring upgrading, the problem of another country may relate to stranded refugees or people displaced by natural disaster. The peculiar characteristics of the homeless problem of a particular country should enable policy makers to identify priority activities. Again this is very necessary in order that meagre public resources are not thinly spread over a wide area of activities thus achieving no impact.

Strengthening existing activities

70. A common defect with policy decisions in the African region is the constant change of priority areas from year to year without implementing a previous programme to a successful end. For one year the emphasis may be to develop local building materials, in the following year resources and emphasis are diverted to water supply; the latter would not necessarily take off before the policy identifies sewage development as most crucial settlement programme and allocates all resources to it. Usually, nothing is achieved and on the contrary, resources are wasted.

71. In this regard, the formulation of programmes to develop shelter for the homeless should not necessarily mean an end to other housing programmes. Policy makers should examine the possibility of integrating all related programmes so that one could strengthen the other.

Popularization and continuity

72. The total exercise of the IYSH would become meaningless if it should end with demonstration projects. The IYSH programme should be considered as both curative and preventive - curative in the sense of solving current homeless problems and preventive in the context of facilitating a housing process for future homeless people. It is therefore necessary for each government to maintain a department under the housing ministry which would popularize the activities and ensure their continuity.

6. CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE ECA

73. The ECA could contribute towards the successful implementation of the IYSH programme in four major areas:

- Preparation of a compendium of technological options for shelter development.
- Review of existing building codes and regulations on subregional levels.
- Demonstration projects particularly for the production of local building materials.
- Co-operation with the UNCHS in any other fields that might be deemed essential for the African region.

74. The ECA has already undertaken some valuable works in the fields mentioned above. What remains is to demonstrate the results at subregional and regional levels.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

75. It would appear that all over Africa governments have policies and schemes for low-income housing. These schemes invariably cover that sector of the population deemed to have limited rent capacities. However, the shelter problems of the poorest of the poor have escaped any determined public attention. With an economic down-turn in most African countries, increased unemployment and accelarated migration into the urban centres, the proportion of Africa's urban homeless population could multiply during the foreseeable future. In the Sahel and other regions bordering the arid zones desertification has turned thousands of Africans homeless. In addition, there is no predicting what damage storms could cause to landed property. Nor will it be possible to eliminate the problem of homeless refugees in the near future. It could be said that homelessness in Africa is here to stay for some time.

76. In conclusion, it could be stated that the time is overdue when homeless people should be given adequate attention for their housing needs. However, in preparing any programme of action for the homeless, both curative and preventive measures should be examined so that the solutions last. The following recommendations are therefore proposed.

African governments should renew their commitment to assist the homeless population to develop their own houses. In that regard, training and demonstration programmes should be given priority. The maximum efforts of the homeless people should be co-ordinated, and emphasis should be on the use of local resources. The ECA should assist African governments in their efforts to house the homeless population of the region. This could be achieved by popularizing technological options available for the human settlements sector, reviewing existing building codes and regulations, organizing demonstration projects for the production of building materials; and finally through co-operation with the UNCHS.

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PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS ACTIVITIES DURING THE BIENNIUM 1984-85

SUMMARY

At its second meeting, the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment will, after using document E/ECA/HUS/8 to review the activities implemented during the period 2 July 1982-10 January 1984 and taking note of the status of recommended activities, have to formulate for the 1984-1985 biennium appropriate follow-up activities to attain the regional objectives which will allow it to have an efficient regional human settlements policy in line with the Lagos Plan of Action.

The Committee considered at its first meeting held in Addis Ababa from 28 June to 2 July 1982 the impact of the Lagos Plan of Action on human settlements policy and the role that human settlements should play in the new regional development model proposed in the Plan.

In order to attain the objectives of the Lagos Plan of Action, it was absolutely essential for economic development plans and programmes to pay greater attention to geographical and spatial factors which not only determined investment priorities and specific and short-term activities in the light of long-term objectives but also provided national physical plans or regional development plans with relevant data inputs for balanced geographical development.

In view of the fact that such national physical plans and regional development plans defined the urbanization structure for specific areas, they constituted a tool for formulating economic development plans and corresponding human settlements policies and programmes.

Hence, in the Committee's view, it was crucial that governments should acquire appropriate instruments and techniques to enable them to better understand the spatial data of the various economic development sectors and consequently to formulate better town planning policies.

The Committee therefore gave priority to a regional policy which would help countries to formulate and implement their national physical plans.

It felt that the situation of human settlements also required national efforts to find an immediate solution to the qualitative and quantitative shortage of housing. It therefore decided that the development of housing financing mechanisms should continue to be given priority attention.

Finally, no substantial assistance could be provided in the area of human settlements without a policy of reducing construction costs especially in Africa. It was therefore necessary to pursue a regional policy of providing assistance in preparing national construction policies through regional, subregional or multi-national programmes for the development of building and building materials industries as well as the development of national bodies for formulating and monitoring the implementation of general policy decisions on construction.

The Committee selected three priorities, namely:

(a) National physical planning;
(b) Housing financing mechanisms;
(c) Improved construction capacity and services.

Obviously, no results could be obtained in the above areas within the 18-month period which separated the two meetings of the Committee; it was therefore necessary to proceed step by step.

This document therefore proposes, in the light of activities undertaken, activities which are a continuation of those implemented during the just ended period, resources which should be available during the coming biennium and projected objectives.

However, the Committee's attention should be drawn once more to some crucial points, in particular, the fact that the governments of member States should help to implement the decisions taken. Such support can be provided at several levels but it should obviously be provided first of all at the national level since the desired results can be obtained only through the constant and unequivocal support of member Governments.

It should be remembered that regional policy is formulated on the basis of national requirements and that without national data that is as accurate as possible, regional activities are unlikely to be appropriate. The active co-operation of member States is therefore indispensable to carry out a qualitative and quantitative assessment of national sectoral problems such as training resources and equipment, construction costs, types of building materials produced, existing administrative structures, etc.

There are also other areas of activity which require the support of member Governments worth mentioning such as various types of pilot activities. The only way that such activities can have the desired effect is for their results to be widely publicized; the same applies to specific national activities which, when publicized, could be of some use to other member States.

Similarly, as mentioned in the document entitled "Progress report of activities since the second meeting - implementation of resolutions adopted by the Committee" presented at the first meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment, machineries for exchanging specialists among member States and at the subregional and regional levels should make it possible to partly alleviate and at a lower cost, the shortage of national experts and facilitate the exchange of experiences as well as improve the level of knowledge in the whole region. The organization of meetings of experts should also contribute towards increasing exchanges to the benefit of national technical departments and permit the formulation of action proposals at the regional and subregional level which correspond to actual national requirements.

Finally, mention should be made of the problem of financial and other resources available to the Committee for implementation of its regional human settlements policy decisions. In line with resolution 32/162 of the United Nations General Assembly which was reflected in resolutions 316(XIII) and 405(XVI) of the ECA Conference of Ministers, the Committee is backed up by a unit of the secretariat of the parent regional commission; the unit operates on resources made available under the regular budget to which extra budgetary resources could be added.

The resources available to the human settlements section under the regular budget are not sufficient to allow it to implement the activities decided upon by the Committee. The Committee therefore has to take measures to increase its resources. It could, for instance, try to ensure that part of the amounts that governments allocate to the United Nations Trust Fund for African Development are devoted to human settlements programmes or opt for a system of contributions designed to ensure that member States bear the costs of organizing meetings of groups of experts, etc.

The importance of the above matters should not be under-estimated. It is therefore desirable that in considering proposals for activities in respect of the period 1984-1985 which is contained in this document, the Committee should also decide on how best to increase its resources in order to implement its programme.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The sound development of human settlements is, both in the short and the long term, a basic necessity and priority for the African region in the social as well as the economic context. The creation of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment reflects the importance attached to this development by the African governments and to the need for taking collective as well as individual actions for tackling the problems involved in human settlements development. Despite the efforts of governments, the overall situation in human settlements remains unsatisfactory in most African countries. The major problems faced by the countries are rapid and haphazard growth of urbanization, very little improvement in the quality of rural settlements, inadequate local opportunities for employment, rural-to-urban migration, inadequate housing, high cost of construction and inadequate capacity and resources for implementing housing programmes. The total effect of these problems is the perpetuation of the social imbalances in living conditions of the population and an inherent weakness in the structure of national development. There is increasing recognition of the need for adopting integrated approaches supported by dynamic policies, programmes and institutional services for bringing about real improvement in the living conditions in urban and rural areas.

2. The Committee at its last meeting has deliberated on the situation and needs in the region and designated the areas of main priority for human settlements development in relation to the objectives and strategies of the Monrovia Declaration and the Lagos Plan of Action. The priorities are physical planning as an integral part of the process of socio-economic planning, training of human settlements personnel, human settlements financing mechanisms, and development of building materials and construction industries. The perspective of activities proposed in this document flows from this decision on priorities and actions considered at the meeting.

3. Considering the nature and ramifications of the priorities, their translation into concrete project activities and results involves a series of actions in a step by step linkage. The period of 18 months which has elapsed since the last meeting of the Committee has been too short for organizing the full range of actions implied in the decisions of the Committee and achieving significant results. The scarcity of resources available for implementing the planned activities has been and continues to be a great restraint on the capacity of the ECA Human Settlements Section which services the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment to achieve the goal on a short term basis.

4. The framework of the perspective for 1984-1985 proposed in this document is basically an elaboration of the tasks assigned by the Committee into a set of project activities to be undertaken on a step by step basis during the biennium. Some of the activities will also constitute the foundation for a future programme of activities to follow beyond the biennium. Some preparatory work in respect of human settlements training facilities and mechanisms and development of local building materials industry has already been initiated.

5. However, pending a satisfactory solution to the problem of insufficiency of resources, the implementation of the activities planned for 1984-1985 is bound to face difficulties.

II. ISSUES RELATED TO THE PRIORITIES FOR ATTENTION

6. The priorities which have been set by the Committee are aimed at bringing about an improved system of human settlements development in relation to socio-economic development, including an effective support system in terms of trained personnel, financing and construction services. Since the priorities are built on basic issues which influence integrated human settlements development, improvement on these lines has a lasting relevance even if, at a future date, some new elements of demand for human settlements call for further and new priorities. Continuity of actions based on the existing priorities is therefore fundamental to the successful implementation of the basic strategy implied in the formulation of these priorities.

7. For the biennium 1984-1985, the actions to be proposed in relation to the above priorities will constitute an important phase of preparation for the achievement of the desired final results in terms of each of the issues on which the priorities are based. It would be useful, at this point, to take note of the rationale behind the actions which are being proposed.

8. Vast sections of Africa's population are concentrated in rural settlements rather than in cities and towns and yet, in general, the rural settlements have not received any significant attention or benefit (except for the impact of increased potential of supplying agricultural produce to an expanding urban market) from the national human settlements development programmes. The basic reason is not lack of national consciousness and will. It is simply that the more pressing problem of human settlements, when stripped down to its essentials has become the problem concerning the urban and the satellite peri-urban sections of the population. The maintenance of and the inevitable element of expansion implied in the present structure of the urban sector absorbs continuously much of the available resources in many African countries and restricts the attention to the rural sector. The trends of urban population growth have an over-riding influence on human settlements planning. As compared with the urban average annual rate of increase of 4.5 per cent in 1950 and 5.3 per cent in 1980, the corresponding figures for rural average annual rate of increase are far less, namely 1.7 per cent and 2.0 per cent respectively. In the years 2000 and 2025, when the growth rate in both cases is expected to show a reverse trend downwards, the estimated rate of urban increase will still be around 4.5 per cent and 3.0 per cent as compared with the expected rural increase 1/ of 1.8 per cent and 0.5 per cent respectively. The trend of the share of urban population in the total population in Africa is as follows 2/:

Year	Percentage of urban population in total population of the African region
1950	14.8
1960	18.4
1970	28.8
1980	28.8
1990	35.7 (estimated)
2000	42.4 "
2010	49.0 "
2020	55.6 "
2025	58.6 "

1/ and 2/ : UN Democratic indicators of countries estimates and projections as assessed in 1980.

Thus, the problem of urban settlements will continue to be a major aspect of human settlements development for the next few decades. Adding to this, is the development demand from large industrial complexes, mining and port town settlements, as essential elements of economic growth.

9. The balanced development of the urban and rural settlements will be greatly facilitated by having unified human settlements approach and services. The scale of the services will however be different. The emphasis of attention in the case of rural settlements development will be on improving the functional quality and durability of the dwelling (specially the walls and the roof) through the application of simple and inexpensive technologies: provision of some local infrastructure in terms of water supply, improved sanitation, health and education facilities; and opportunities for improvement and optimum utilization of local crafts and skills.

10. The indigenous construction industry in the African region has had no real growth or improvement in its capacity, mainly on account of lack of access to technology and finance. It therefore finds itself in a situation of competitive handicap vis-a-vis the foreign construction companies operating in Africa. This, in turn, has denied it access to construction opportunities other than small scale. The dependence on foreign construction expertise and services continues in most African countries. The high cost of construction is a direct result of this situation and also of the perennial shortage of essential building materials.

11. Problems in implementation of human settlements programmes, in particular housing, are partly due to the high cost of construction. There is urgent need to devise and adopt measures to reduce construction costs. Building materials account for about 60 per cent of the construction costs and constitute the single large element which can contribute to the achievement of substantial reduction in construction costs. The major aspects which require attention are:

- increased availability of essential building materials like cement, clay bricks, roofing materials, wood and steel products through increased local production and improved supply and distribution systems;

- standardization and quality control;

- development and utilization of alternate building materials, specially those based on local resources and enterprise;

- improvement of local construction capacities and services

In above mentioned aspects relating to building materials, technology and training play an important role. Development of suitable institutional facilities and services for this purpose is essential.

12. Building Codes and Regulations promote or hinder construction activities depending upon whether they are appropriate or not to local conditions and needs. An ECA study 3/ has shown that the existing codes and regulations in most African countries are a replica of foreign codes and regulations which have become obsolete long ago in the countries of their origin and are ill-suited to the current and future needs of

3/ ECA/MULPOC/Lusaka/VI/3f.

African countries. African governments have already decided that the reformulation of the codes and regulation is necessary and should be undertaken on priority. Codes and regulations can be very helpful in guiding human settlements development, in promoting the development of building materials and construction industries on desired lines, in ensuring basic technical qualities required in building construction and in controlling construction costs.

III. PERSPECTIVE OF ACTIVITIES FOR 1984-1985

13. As the Committee has already observed, human settlements development, in order to be successful, has to be an integral part of the process of national development. The first need in this respect is to design the strategies and formulate policies and programmes for human settlements in such a way that they harmonize with the strategies, policies and programmes for national development and to ensure that the process of national development provides, at all stages, for automatic planning and implementation of all related aspects of human settlements development.

14. Unfortunately, in very few African countries, the human settlements development planning is integrated into national development planning, despite decisions taken by governments to do so. Allocation of resources at national level for human settlements programmes has been, in many cases, on adhoc basis with no certainty of repetitive or increased allocation. International assistance has been insufficient and barring some instances of training programmes, its impact has mainly remained local, without the benefits reaching other countries who have similar needs. As a result, the human settlements planning machinery and methodology in many African countries remains weak.

15. Planning, financing and training in Human Settlements development as well as the strengthening of the construction sector continue to be the priorities for national, subregional and regional initiatives and for international support. The perspective for the biennium 1984-1985 is conceived as a preparation of steps within these priorities which, by their short term results and impact, would pave the way to the achievement of the ultimate objective of a self-sustaining and all-round human settlements development. Based on this approach, the following actions are proposed for 1984-1985.

16. For convenience, the perspective is outlined under the two heads "Policy development and Institution - building" and "Efficient resource development and utilization" which are the two programme elements on human settlements assigned to the Economic Commission for Africa in its work programme.

A. Policy Development and Institution Building

(i) Human Settlements Policy Formulation

17. The Monrovia Strategy for the economic development of Africa and the Lagos Plan of Action emphasize the importance of a planning approach which synthesizes the various economic sectors - agriculture, energy, industry, transport, communications etc. - to a relationship based on complementarity. Physical planning as an element of general economic planning is, by implication, closely linked to each of these sectors, apart from the social sector. The physical planning development policy is basically a human settlements network development policy or what may be described as urbanization. Urbanization is multi-disciplinary by its very nature and Governments accordingly need multi-disciplinary technical mechanisms for policy and

programme formulation, co-ordination, implementation and monitoring for integrated social and economic development. They must review the existing technical mechanisms related to physical planning in order to enhance their efficiency or develop, where required, new mechanisms which would respond appropriately to their needs.

18. However, scarcity of resources has necessitated the choice of activities directed towards the development of national capacities and related resources in terms of training of personnel and development of training facilities in human settlements and promotion of co-operation among countries based on exchange of expertise, experience and information. Studies on the socio-cultural aspects which determine and influence solutions to specific basic problems of land-use and ownership in urban or rural social environment in the various African countries and on the successful practices or possibilities of public participation for adoption in other countries may provide a solution to lessen the developmental burden and responsibilities of the Governments and to bring about greater involvement of individuals and the community. For bestowing unified attention to the problems of human settlements development and to the formulation, implementation and monitoring of programmes which are intended to be the solution to the problems, a 'nodal mechanism' within the governmental planning apparatus is necessary. Each government should develop and instal such a nodal mechanism, if necessary with the technical assistance of the Economic Commission for Africa.

19. The human settlements policies should provide focal thrust to human settlements development as a whole by promoting it as an integral feature of the national development process, by ensuring that the programmes and activities which are designed take care of the inter-linkages, and by encouraging public participation in the activities. They should lead to practical guidelines for urbanization and improved availability and efficient use of land; institutionally - organized housing programmes and related infrastructure, especially for the economically weaker sections of the society, the homeless, refugees and displaced persons; institutionally - organized technical assistance to improve the quality of rural housing and related infrastructure; development of a professional cadre of human settlements planners and technicians; and institutionalized incentives to boost building activity (for example: building finance on low interest rate, tax benefits, helpful building codes and regulations, incentives for educational/training/employment programmes, easy availability of building materials and construction services at reasonable cost etc.).

20. In the context of above approach, the following actions by African governments during the biennium are suggested:

- Formulation of a comprehensive national human settlements policy and its incorporation in the next national plan. The policy should specify the priorities of development, the kind of actions to be taken and the agency responsibilities for the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of the actions. It should declare clearly the nature of assistance which can be expected from the government. The policy should be subject to a review automatically in the context of each succeeding national plan for amendment and improvement.

- Creation of a national multi-disciplinary 'nodal mechanism' which would function as a focal point for human settlements development matters and provide requisite technical services to the government for the formulation and implementation of physical planning policies and programmes in close relationship with the national policies and programmes for the development of the social and economic sectors.

(ii) Human settlements planning and programming

21. To assist African countries in improving their capacities, methodologies and institutional machineries for human settlements development planning and programming as an integral exercise of socio-economic planning, the following activities are suggested for the biennium 1984-1985:

- Studies on existing spatial planning methodologies; preparation of a model of improved methodology and the means of its implementation; evaluation of the proposal by African governments in a regional experts group meeting with a view to designing regional policies and programmes and providing assistance to national endeavours for their adoption and implementation;

- Preparation of a manual which will serve as guidelines for African governments for designing and adopting their own new spatial planning methodologies and machineries, based on the model.

22. It is further suggested that the two activities proposed in paragraph 21, should be undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa, in light of resolution 4(I) of the last meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment.

B. Efficient Resource Development and Utilization

23. Policies and programmes, however relevant, are of little use without effective means of their implementation. Many well-conceived and crucial programmes in African countries have suffered on this account. Efficient resource development and utilization - in terms of Money, Manpower and Materials - is important not only because of this aspect but also because it can be instrumental in efficient management of the cost of human settlements programmes and activities. The major problems in human settlements development at present can be attributed to a critical shortage of these three resources and the need to improve the efficiency of utilization. There is also a need for meaningful public participation in human settlements development activities to supplement and reinforce government efforts and reduce the burden of government's direct responsibilities on this account.

24. In the above context, the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment has already considered the need for development/improvement of human settlements personnel training facilities, adoption of new innovative methodologies for mobilizing housing finance and the continuation of the assistance being provided to African countries for their development of building materials and construction industries under the regional programme designed and executed by the Economic Commission for Africa. Attention to these three areas has a long-term validity.

(i) Human settlements personnel training

25. By resolution 4 (I) of its last meeting, the Joint Intergovernmental Committee on Human Settlements and Environment has urged, inter-alia, the governments and the Economic Commission for Africa to give priority to the training of all categories and cadres of manpower in the field of human settlements and environment and ensure optimum utilization of existing facilities in this regard. 4/ The Economic Commission for Africa has accordingly convened an Experts' group meeting on regional human settlements training facilities and mechanisms (from 1-4 November 1983 at Addis Ababa) in order to appraise the suitability of existing training facilities and mechanisms to current needs and to formulate policies and guidelines for the organization of supporting training facilities and programmes at regional level. The consensus of the deliberations of the Experts' Group was that training facilities in the African region in the field of human settlements were inadequate and need to be expanded; training and information programmes need to be tuned with research and development programmes; curriculum development and training of trainers should keep pace the structural changes in technology, management, economic and social concepts concerning human settlements; there should be close co-operation among the various training institutions; the training programmes should be designed to cover professional and para-professionals (architects, engineers, economists, sociologists, etc.) besides planners and academicians, middle and lower level construction manpower, development of urban and rural systems for low-cost sanitation and waste disposal. The Experts' group has made recommendations for actions concerning the various issues.

26. Based on these proposals, the following activities in respect of human settlements training are suggested for the biennium 1984-1985:

- Compilation by ECA of a Directory on the existing and planned human settlements training institutions in Africa, indicating the training and research programmes they offer;

- Studies to improve the existing training programmes and mechanisms at national, subregional and regional level and to plan new ones in the context of the changing needs of human settlements development;

- Review the curriculum of the training of urban and regional planners and make proposals with a view to make them more problem-oriented and to accommodate concepts of inter-disciplinary planning approach;

- Formulation of a comprehensive long-term programme (well aligned with the long-term regional planning which has been recommended separately) for training of various categories of human settlements personnel, outlining the national, subregional and regional components and the modalities of co-operation among the training institutions within Africa and between them and the institutions outside Africa;

- Preparation and promotion of schemes for the strengthening of existing training facilities and for their possible collective utilization.

4/ ECA document E/ECA/HUS/ENV/1.

(ii) Human Settlements development financing

27. In the years ahead, the dimensions of human settlements development (including the crucial aspects of integrated rural development, urban and rural infrastructure related to human settlements, proper settlement of refugees and displaced persons, provision of shelter for the homeless, training of manpower for human settlements planning and for construction services) will demand commitment of resources far beyond the needs of housing finance only. Ways and means will have to be found for mobilizing resources for "Human Settlements Development Financing" to cover, as much as possible, all sections of population and activities related to their needs in a phased programme spread over several years. National efforts for mobilizing the resources will not be adequate. Truly, an international effort and assistance will be required, both in financial and technical terms. The Experts' group meeting on human settlements training facilities and mechanisms referred to in paragraph 25 has also cited finance as a crucial area for human settlements development.

28. The following activities in regard to human settlements development financing are suggested for the biennium 1984-1985:

- Consultations among countries and intergovernmental/international organizations, in particular Shelter Afrique, for promoting a comprehensive long-term scheme for human settlements development financing;

- Preparation of the scheme, outlining its scope, modalities of administration and the national, subregional, regional and international components, for the consideration of the governments and intergovernmental/international organizations;

- Designing the assistance to be provided to the governments for the formulation and adoption of policies and actions to support the operation of the scheme.

(iii) Building materials and construction industries development

29. As past experience has shown, the building materials and construction industries development is a crucial element of human settlement development. The development programme undertaken by the Economic Commission for Africa as well as those undertaken by the governments themselves have produced encouraging results. The next phase of activities in this field according to the guidelines indicated in resolution 5(I) of the last meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee should concentrate on promoting decentralization and diversification of the building materials industry; progressive indigenization of the construction services; development, demonstration and adoption of appropriate technologies; entrepreneurship development; training and upgrading of skills; standardization of materials and construction practices; and equally importantly, ways and means of achieving cost reduction in construction and building materials production. The Experts' Group meeting on human settlements training facilities and mechanisms has also recommended training of construction manpower.

30. Based on above guidelines, the following activities are suggested for the biennium 1984-1985:

- Compilation of a Directory on existing/planned production of essential building materials in African countries;

- Promotion of pilot plants/demonstration projects for popularizing the scope for decentralization and diversification of building materials production based on local materials; these projects will also have their related training programmes;

- Promotion of subregional co-operation, facilities and programmes for building materials and construction technology development;

- Establishment of a regional network of information services on building materials and construction industries, with national and subregional linkages;

- Pilot project studies for the reformulation of building codes and regulation to suit the changing needs of the African region; evaluation of its results and promoting the adoption of the reformulated codes and regulations by governments;

- Organizing training programmes for improving the technical and managerial capacity of indigenous contractors; and vocational training programmes for construction manpower;

- Formulation of guidelines for promoting cost reduction in construction.

(iv) Public participation in human settlements development

- Compilation and dissemination of information on the existing/planned systems of public participation in human settlements development in African countries, their experiences and future needs;

- Formulation of guidelines on improving the system.

C. Preparations for the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless

31. By its resolution 36/71 (December 1981), the United Nations General Assembly has declared the Year 1987 as the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless and has designated the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements as the lead agency for co-ordinating the relevant programmes and activities. 5/ Other bodies of the United Nations system have been requested to collaborate and make special efforts during the period 1983-1987 towards the achievement of the goals of the International Year. A document 6/ on this subject outlining the proposals of the Economic Commission for

5/ Resolution 37/221 adopted by UN General Assembly.

6/ ECA document E/ECA/HUS/7.

Africa is separately submitted for the consideration of the Second meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment. These proposals relate to the issues concerning the African region which will require attention in the context of the global programme for the International Year.

32. For the biennium 1984-1985, the following activities based on above-mentioned ECA proposals are suggested:

- Declaration of a special policy by governments regarding specific housing programmes and related infrastructure facilities;
- National legislation for state acquisition and development of un-owned un-used land for building shelter for the homeless;
- Assistance in the preparation of national master-plan for building shelter and providing related services;
- Preparation of a scheme for providing occupational training to the homeless in techniques of home-building and local production of low-cost building materials.

These steps would set the stage for organizing concrete actions in the next phase towards the International Year of Shelter for the homeless.

IV. RESOURCE SUPPORT FOR ACTIVITIES

33. The implementation of the activities suggested in the earlier paragraphs will call for special efforts and commitment of additional resources including a programme of technical assistance to the countries by the Economic Commission for Africa, other United Nations bodies, international organizations and bilateral donors.

34. Assistance in a very large measure from the Economic Commission for Africa will be required for the activities including the co-ordination of inputs from other organizations. Inadequate financial resources has been the single major bottleneck to the implementation of some of the earlier decisions of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment. This situation will further deteriorate during 1984-1985 because of the termination of the UNDP funding for the ECA Building Materials and Construction Industries Development Programme, the depletion of bilateral assistance for this programme, and inadequate pledging by member States to meet the needs of human settlements activities at the last pledging Conference which took place in April/May 1983 at Addis Ababa.

35. The second meeting of the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment - which is the supreme body for human settlements development matters concerning the African region - is therefore an occasion for serious introspection for organizing required resources for the implementation of the perspective activities for the biennium 1984-1985, in the field of human settlements by the Human Settlements Section of ECA. It is necessary for the Committee to address itself specially to finding the ways and means of implementation of its decisions.

V. CONCLUSION

36. On review, it is evident that, despite the measures taken by the countries, the net situation of human settlements development in the African region continues to be unsatisfactory in respect of integrated planning, implementation and institutional machinery. The past approach of disjointed development of the various facets of human settlements must be replaced by a system of co-ordinated development so that all the inter-linkages receive synchronized attention through concerted actions.

37. The biennium 1984-1985 should be adopted as a period for launching new policy thrust by all African governments and for initiating a new set of developmental programmes and actions and also, at regional level, to assist in implementation. This biennium should be utilized as an opportunity to take stock of existing policies and programmes, past experience and long-term future needs and to formulate a comprehensive special national policy on human settlements development covering the main issues elaborated in this document and other special issues of local priority. The policy must clearly outline the government's commitments of assistance towards its implementation. More importantly, the elements of the policy must be effectively incorporated in the next national plans of the countries. Such a step would have a far-reaching impact internally and externally. Precise, concrete and resource-oriented programmes with good chance of implementation and effective public participation would emerge. The planning methodologies and implementation capacities would be improved. In particular, the application of systematic spatial planning methodologies in human settlements development based on experiemental pilot - projects must receive priority attention.

38. The key development issues will continue to be Money, Manpower and Materials. On a long-term perspective, the creation of a human settlements development financing arrangement which is not restricted to or against specific aspects of human settlements development but is really in the nature of an "Umbrella financing" will be necessary. Training facilities and programmes for human settlements planners and technicians must also receive priority attention on the basis of a collective initiative on the part of the governments. It is equally important to find ways and means of continuing the on-going ECA regional programme for the development of the building materials and construction industries (beyond its term ending in April 1984) with a new thrust on promoting a strong base of local building materials industry and construction services, technology development programmes and facilities, skills training and the reformulation of building codes and regulations.

39. This biennium must also focus, as a special programme, on initiating preparatory actions on the African component of the proposed International Year 7/ of Shelter for the homeless.

7/ Year 1987.

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Brief note on proposed regional project on "Improvement of local building materials" sponsored by ACC* Task Force on Science and Technology for Development

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* Administrative Committee on Co-ordination of the United Nations.

INTRODUCTION

1. The United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development held in Vienna in August 1979 1/ stressed the need to bridge the gap between developed and developing countries and to strengthen the endogenous capacities of developing countries in science and technology. An operational plan for the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development adopted by the Conference recommended the identification of activities in the field of science and technology to be implemented jointly by organizations of the United Nations system.

2. In its resolution 34/218 2/ the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the Vienna programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development, decided to establish an Intergovernmental Committee on Science and Technology for Development and requested the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) to assist the Intergovernmental Committee at the latter's request. Subsequently a special Task Force of ACC identified 24 project proposals to be implemented jointly by about 30 specialized institutions of the United Nations system. All member States of the UN, and particularly developing countries, have already been contacted by the United Nations Centre for Science and Technology for Development to express their particular interest in one or the other of the 24 project proposals.

3. Among these proposals is one entitled "Improvement of local building materials". The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has been designated by the ACC Task Force as the lead agency for this project. FAO is co-operating in this endeavour with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS/Habitat), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

4. The project has been planned on a global basis but in view of the peculiarities of problems in the various regions, and in order to achieve tangible and practical results that would contribute in a meaningful way to the increased utilization of local building materials in the developing countries, FAO has recommended the adoption of a regional approach to the implementation of the project. On this basis a regional project for Africa has been designed by FAO with the active collaboration of ECA and experts from selected African countries. The project proposal takes due account of the foundation already laid by the ECA programme for the development of building materials and construction industries which has been financed to-date by the United Nations Development Programme. Because of the close linkage of the building materials industry with other sectors of the national economy including food and agriculture, industry, transport, human settlements, education, science and technology, its development is necessarily a continuous process. The ACC Task Force project on the improvement of local building materials is therefore expected to enhance that process and contribute to the alleviation of current problems associated with the availability of building materials for housing and building programmes in the countries of the African region.

1/ See Report of the United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development Vienna, 20-31 August 1979 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.79.I.2 and corrigenda).

2/ Res. 34/218 United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development, 23 January 1980.

5. This brief note on the project has been prepared by ECA secretariat, at the request of FAO headquarters, for consideration by the Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment.

OBJECTIVES AND OUTPUTS OF THE PROJECT

6. The rationale behind the formulation of the project is that a wealth of knowledge already exists in African countries on how a number of local building materials could be developed and used in housing and building projects in both urban and rural areas. The main problem to-date has been one of translating this accumulated knowledge into concrete projects which could serve as stimuli for the future development, improvement and use of local building materials. The proposed regional project will thus aim at addressing the main factors that have hitherto served as hindrances to the widespread use of local building materials.

7. Within the overall objective of promoting the use of locally available building materials 3/ in the countries of the African region, the project will have the following immediate objectives:

(i) To identify and upgrade appropriate building techniques based on local building materials;

(ii) To stimulate education, research and training in order to maintain and improve technologies and skills in the production and use of local building materials;

(iii) To encourage the active involvement of governments, the building industry and the building planners/designers in promoting the use of appropriate local building materials.

(iv) To assist countries in the formulation and execution of projects to develop or promote the use of local building materials; and

(v) To stimulate collaboration of activities relating to local building materials within United Nations agencies.

8. The outputs of the project are expected to make significant contributions to national, subregional and regional efforts geared to enhancing and sustaining the rational and increased use of proven local building materials in housing and building programmes. Among the planned outputs are the following:

(i) Manuals on the manufacture and use of specific local building materials;

(ii) Subregional pilot plants to demonstrate the production of roofing and binding materials;

(iii) Model buildings demonstrating the use of available local building materials;

(iv) Feasibility studies leading to national projects for the use of local building materials;

(v) Teaching materials (books, slides, films);

3/ In this context "local building materials" refers to those building materials which are based on locally available raw materials and which can be produced and utilized with locally available skill and equipment.

(vi) Subregional centres at existing institutions for teaching, training, research and research co-ordination for promoting local building materials;

(vii) Trained personnel (architects, engineers, artisans).

FINANCING OF PROJECT

10. The project is estimated to cost about US$2.5 million over a five year period. The funds required for implementation of the project are to be mobilized with the assistance to the ACC Task Force on Science and Technology for Development and the participating United Nations agencies. Already FAO has allocated an amount of US$28,000 for preparatory work for the project including the preparation of the project document, a "state of the art" report and a detailed work programme for the project.

11. The project is conceived as an "umbrella" project under which participating countries will be stimulated to initiate national projects geared to specific local needs and conditions. The regional project will assist in the formulation and mobilization of resources for the implementation of such national projects.

COMMENCEMENT OF PROJECT

12. The implementation of the project is tentatively scheduled to start on 1 June 1984 depending on the successful mobilization of the required funds. Some preparatory activities have however, been already undertaken by FAO as the lead agency. A draft project document prepared by FAO was discussed by an inter-agency committee comprising representatives of FAO, ECA, UNCHS (Habitat), UNESCO and UNIDO during the CIB-RILEM 4/ symposium on appropriate building materials for low-cost housing held at Nairobi, Kenya in November 1983. The committee decided that the document should be revised to reflect the decisions and recommendations of the above symposium.

13. Subsequently, the project document was revised by a group of four experts from African countries invited by FAO together with representatives of FAO and ECA during a week's working session at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in December 1983. The project document is currently being finalized by FAO for submission to the ACC Task Force on Science and Technology for Development.

THE ROLE OF AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS

14. The successful implementation of this regional project will require the active support and involvement of the governments of African countries. Specifically, the Governments are expected, inter alia, to:

(i) Indicate their interest in participating in the project;

(ii) Provide such facilities and conditions as would facilitate the carrying out of the components of project activities in the countries;

4/ CIB - International Council for Building Research, Studies and Documentation
RILEM - International Union of Testing and Research Laboratories for Materials and Structures.

(iii) Undertake, as part of the implementation of the regional project, national projects geared to the promotion of local building materials, or strengthen on-going projects;

(iv) Make national experts available to participate in the activities of the project including study visits, expert meetings, establishment of pilot plants and construction of demonstration buildings.

15. The Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment has designated, as priority, the development of the building materials and oonsturction industries in the countries of the region. The proposed project, which will build upon the foundation already laid by ECA in this connexion, and complement on-going efforts by the ECA secretariat and other concerned organizations of the United Nations system, will help in achieving the objectives set by the committee for the building materials and construction sector. The committee should therefore accord priority to the implementation of the project and invite the Governments of member States of ECA to give it their fullest support.

CONCLUSION

16. The attainment of a genuinely self-reliant building materials industry in the countries of the African region demands a renewed political commitment by Governments to initiate, support and sustain actions that would help to overcome existing bottlenecks and prejudices, and lead to the increased use of locally produced building materials in housing and building projects. The dependence on imported building materials in the past has not only been expensive from the point of view of utilization of scarce foreign exchange, but has also led to serious shortages because of inability of many governments to allocate sufficient funds for the importation of such materials.

17. The project proposal on the improvement of local building materials (in Africa) of the ACC Task Force on Science and Technology for Development for which FAO has been designated the lead agency, and which will be implemented with the active collaboration of ECA and other concerned organizations of the United Nations System, will seek to strengthen the efforts underway in many countries in the region to deal with the chronic problems characterizing the supply of building materials for construction through increased exploitation of locally available resources.

18. African Governments are therefore, invited to commit themselves to an active involvement in the implementation of the project so as to complement and strengthen their own programmes for promoting the increased use of local building materials in housing and building in both urban and rural areas.

19. The Joint Intergovernmental Regional Committee on Human Settlements and Environment is hereby invited to lend its support to the project proposal since the successful achievement of the objectives of that project will contribute greatly towards the attainment of a self-reliant and self-sustaining building materials industry in the African region, which is a priority concern of the Committee.